



State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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Dear CWD Permit Holder:

Thank you for your efforts to fight Chronic Wasting Disease. You are making progress in this tough task, but there is still a long way to go. My purpose in writing is to give you an update on how things are going, what lies ahead, and to ask again for your help.

Over 11,000 deer have been killed in the Intensive Harvest Zone to date (8000 of which were killed in the Eradication Zone). Fifty deer have tested positive of the 2200 samples tested thus far from the CWD Eradication Zone. The Department has sampled an additional 27,000 deer around the rest of the state. At this time, 6700 test results have come back with 5 positives showing up on the western edge of the Eradication Zone. Please visit our website to view test results by county or deer management unit: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/Whealth/issues/Cwd/results.htm>

Although we are disappointed to find positive deer outside of the Eradication Zone, this is not unexpected. Deer herd reduction remains critical to reducing disease transmission. The 8000 deer killed in the Eradication Zone thus far is equal to the number of fawns born last spring. We're having a mild winter and can expect strong fawn production this spring. We may well be faced with the same deer densities next summer that were present this past summer if the deer kill isn't significantly increased yet this winter. That could mean all your hard work this fall could be lost.

We held eight local township-based meetings on October 30 (attended by over 270 landowners and hunters in the Eradication Zone) to gather ideas on deer herd reduction strategies beyond the hunting season. Approximately 35 representatives of Eradication Zone townships, Management Zone counties, and various organizations then attended a workshop on November 15-16 to provide recommendations to the Department regarding herd reduction strategies. The following recommendations came from those meetings:

- **Extend landowner permits through March 31, lifting the Earn-a-Buck requirement beginning February 1.** We will be sending you a separate letter later in January, amending your current permit and explaining how the extended season (for landowner permit holders only) will work. The regular gun season will still expire January 31. Starting February 1, ONLY people hunting under the authority of a landowner permit may continue to hunt.
- **Provide DNR pick-up of carcasses to landowners.** We anticipate providing this service in February and March to CWD permit holders. One or more of the current registration stations would remain open to accommodate an on-farm pick-up schedule that would operate 2 or 3 days each week.
- **Allow people hunting under the authority of a landowner permit to shoot deer over bait placed by DNR.** The Department has obtained the approval of the Natural Resources Board to amend the current rules to allow landowners and their agents to shoot deer over bait during regular shooting hours. The statewide feeding and baiting ban would still be in effect, with an emergency exemption granted by the Board for the Eradication Zone. The Department would establish all baiting areas in cooperation with willing landowners.
- **Authorize DNR staff to shoot over bait and elsewhere as opportunities arise.** This would allow DNR staff and other government shooters to kill deer, with landowner permission, over bait and elsewhere on landowner property. Shooting would be done from stands or vehicles including at

night (with the aid of light). DNR staff would be allowed to shoot deer over bait on public land beginning February 1 (after the gun deer season closes on January 31). The effectiveness of hunting over bait will be dependent on snow cover. All government shooters will have completed a training and shooting qualifications program and will only shoot deer under very strict safety protocols. Landowners may receive a copy of these protocols if requested. Government shooters killed about 600 deer in the Eradication Zone last spring and summer. It has proven to be a safe and effective way to kill deer.

A very popular fifth recommendation from the township meetings is the idea of paying landowners and their agents to shoot deer. The Department is pursuing this idea but cannot fully implement the recommendation without Legislative action. Support for this recommendation will grow if we all can make significant progress in getting the herd significantly reduced toward goal. There are many important issues to be resolved before we could consider doing this, not the least of which are liability issues (is the state or the landowner liable if an accident occurs?) and payment issues (where does the money come from, who gets it - the landowner or the hunter?). We've heard you and the idea is still on the table.

Linking hunters with landowners. We are exploring methods to link willing hunters from around the state and around the country with landowners who are willing to allow them to hunt on their property. These are men and women who have said they would be willing to come to the area to shoot deer for landowners.

Hunting activity has slowed within the zone and there has been a decrease in the number of deer being killed. That's to be expected. It's tough to keep hunting day after day during a gun-deer season that has been open since October 24. Perhaps you or the friends and family that normally hunt your property don't have the energy or interest to continue hunting. I know I have heard from some landowners that the people who have hunted their land in the past didn't even come to hunt this year. Whatever your situation may be, I would like to propose a way for you to be linked up with other volunteers who might be willing to come hunt your property, with your permission.

To prevent you from being swamped with calls and visits, I'd like to propose two possible ways to get more hunters. One scenario would involve us sending you a list of hunters (you tell us how many). You could contact them at your leisure to ask them to come hunt on your property. This approach completely insulates you from phone calls and requires that you take the initiative to line up hunters. The other approach involves us giving your name and telephone number to a certain number of hunters (again, you tell us how many) that express interest in helping. We would only give out your name and number - it would be up to the hunter to actually call you, introduce themselves, etc.

On the opposite page are a series of questions that I would appreciate your feedback on. They will help us identify which of the strategies you are willing to participate in. Please fill that out, refold the letter so the DNR address is on the outside of the letter, and send it back to us.

Thank you so much for whatever help you can give. Our resolve to help you eradicate CWD from Wisconsin is steadfast. You've told us what will help you be more effective in reducing the deer population and we'll do our best to provide you with the tools. We still believe that this is our best chance to stop the disease. Between now and the end of March, I'm asking for your recommitment to the CWD battle and your energy to take additional deer on your land. I don't want all your hard work to be lost.

Sincerely,

Scott Hassett, Secretary
Department of Natural Resources

Ways That You Can Help

Please check the appropriate boxes below, refold the letter with the postage-paid reply address showing, tape it shut, and drop it in the mail.

Willing to Allow Baiting on Your Property?

Baiting can be an effective way to kill deer with adequate snow cover. We would only place bait on property where we have permission. We would place baits in safe locations and meet with you to identify a safe site, shooting times, etc. before we would actually shoot over a bait site. UW students may have also contacted you about putting bait on your property to trap deer for a research project. Both efforts are very important.

- ☐ I am willing to shoot deer over bait placed on my property by the DNR. I understand that the DNR will also be able to shoot deer over the bait if I am not able to do so. Please contact me with more information
- ☐ I am willing to have the DNR establish a bait site on my property, but I would prefer that the DNR do the shooting at the bait site. Please contact me with more information.
- ☐ I am not interested in having the DNR establish a bait site on my property for the purpose of shooting deer.

Willing to Allow DNR Staff to Shoot Deer on Your Property WITHOUT the Aid of Bait?

As was the case this summer, DNR has the authority to shoot deer on private property, from a vehicle, and at night, with landowner permission. We would only do so after developing a safety plan for your property and if you desire, we would meet with you to discuss safe shooting zones, times, etc.

- ☐ I am willing to allow DNR staff to shoot deer on my property without the aid of bait. Please contact me with more information
- ☐ I am not interested in having the DNR shoot deer on my property.

Need More Hunters?

I realize this is not going to be for everybody. But IF you are interested in getting some more help shooting deer on your property, I urge you to tell me how many more hunters you would be willing to have and whether you want to call them or have them call you. We've never done anything like this before, so we don't know how it will work. But if you are willing to give it a try we'll see how it goes.

- ☐ I would prefer to call and invite other hunters to hunt on my land. Please send me names and telephone numbers of _____ (how many) hunters so that I can contact them.
- ☐ I would prefer to be called by other hunters. Please send my name and telephone number to _____ (how many) hunters and ask them to call me for permission to hunt on my land.
- ☐ Thanks for asking, but I don't think I need any additional hunters on my property at this time.

Contact Information

Please call me with more information about the selections I have chosen above.

Your Name: _____ Best Time(s) to Call: _____

Home phone: _____ Work phone: _____

Cell phone: _____